

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

October 27, 2010

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Statement by Secretary Clinton

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
October 26, 2010

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON**Cyclone Damage in Burma**

On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I offer our condolences on the loss of life and damage caused in Burma's Rakhine State by Cyclone Giri. The U.S. Embassy in Rangoon has offered immediate disaster relief assistance, and we will offer additional assistance as needed. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Burmese people and all those affected by this tragedy.

Secretary Clinton to Meet with Asia-Pacific Leaders

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton plans extensive talks with leaders and senior officials from at least eight East Asian and Pacific nations during a 13-day trip to the region, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

In addition, Clinton is scheduled to address the East Asia Summit being held in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, on October 30, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said at a briefing October 26 in Washington. It is Clinton's sixth major trip to the region and "is intended to send a strong message of U.S. engagement on a range of issues" — strategic, political and economic.

From October 27 to November 8, Clinton is traveling to Hawaii, Guam, Vietnam, Hainan Island in China, Cambodia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Australia and American Samoa. The secretary's trip coincides with President Obama's travel to India, Indonesia, South Korea and Japan November 6-14.

"At every stop, the secretary will highlight both political and economic interactions, a desire to promote U.S. exports and see a more forward engagement on economic matters," Campbell said. He is the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

During a stopover in Honolulu on October 27, Clinton will meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara to discuss all areas of the U.S.-Japanese relationship, Campbell said. Clinton will deliver a significant foreign policy speech at the East-West Center on U.S. engagement with the region, which will be similar to one she gave in January, he added.

After leaving Honolulu, Clinton will stop briefly in Guam to meet with U.S. forces stationed there and with Governor Felix Camacho and other representatives of the U.S. territory.

In Hanoi, Clinton will participate in the East Asia Summit that is being held by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) along with six other nations from around the region, and as a guest of the chairman will make an address to the summit, Campbell said.

ASEAN includes Indonesia, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Burma.

In addition to the multilateral meetings taking place, the secretary will meet with the Vietnamese leadership on issues of closer coordination between the United States and Vietnam. This follows the secretary's visit to Hanoi in July as part of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Clinton will also meet with representatives on the Lower Mekong Initiative, which is a collection of states that all share the Mekong River as part of their heritage. The United States will discuss the next steps associated with U.S. assistance and a program for cooperation that links the Mississippi River and the Mekong, two of the world's great rivers, Campbell told reporters.

From Hanoi Clinton travels to Hainan Island in the South China Sea, where she will hold extensive talks with her counterpart in the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, State Counselor Dai Bingguo.

"We will review the various issues in the U.S.-China relationship, make sure that we're making adequate preparations for both the upcoming G20 [Group of 20] meeting, [the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum], and particularly for the session that will take place in January, when [Chinese President] Hu Jintao visits the United States in the early part of 2011," Campbell added.

The secretary will hold consultations with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong and highlight civil society projects and other issues in which the United States is deeply engaged, such as the Peace Corps, Campbell said. Clinton will stop in Malaysia November 1 to meet with senior officials, discuss enhanced ties, promote trade and discuss educational exchanges.

On November 3 Clinton will meet in Papua New Guinea with Prime Minister Michael Somare and other senior government officials, women leaders and environmental experts. Campbell said this stop is part of a larger effort by the United States to enhance engagement in the Pacific.

"There are important issues on the island of biodiversity, issues associated with the status of women, and also questions associated about how the current government plans to manage this tremendous windfall that will be coming to the people of Papua New Guinea through this massive find of petroleum and natural gas," Campbell said.

Clinton then stops in New Zealand for political, security and economic talks, Campbell said. In Australia Clinton will be joined by U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to meet with Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defense Minister Stephen Smith for the 25th anniversary of the annual Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations to discuss regional and global security issues. Clinton will also meet with Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

The secretary will make a brief stopover on the trip back to the United States in American Samoa, Campbell said.

U.S. Committing \$44 Million to Women's Empowerment Initiatives

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that the Obama administration will commit nearly \$44 million for women's empowerment initiatives around the world to advance U.N. Security Council goals of integrating women into international peace and security efforts.

Speaking at the Security Council in New York October 26, Clinton said the largest portion of the U.S. funding — \$17 million — will support civil society groups in Afghanistan that focus on women. Women in Afghanistan, she said, are "rightly worried that in the very legitimate search for peace their rights will be sacrificed."

The secretary was referring to efforts by the Afghan government and the Taliban to engage in reconciliation talks. Under Taliban rule, women faced oppressive treatment.

Clinton said U.N. member states cannot permit Afghan women to lose their rights. "No peace that sacrifices women's rights is a peace we can afford to support," she said.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, which was adopted in October 2000, marked the first time the Security Council required people in conflict areas to respect women's rights and to support the essential role that women play in peacemaking and ending sexual violence in conflicts.

The secretary said that through the resolution, the

international community "promised that women would be treated as agents of peace and reconciliation, not just as victims of war and violence."

Including the full participation of women in resolving conflicts is not merely "a nice thing to do," Clinton said, but actually "a necessary global security imperative" that promotes stability, economic growth and respect for human rights.

"Just as in the economic sphere we cannot exclude the talents of half the population, neither when it comes to matters of life and death can we afford to ignore, marginalize and dismiss the very direct contributions that women can and have made," she said.

The secretary said \$14 million of the new U.S. commitment will be given to nongovernmental organizations that are trying to increase the availability of clean water in conflict zones, saying that in those areas "when women and girls go looking for water they are at higher risk of being attacked."

She also said \$11 million "will help expand literacy, job training and maternal health services for refugee women and girls," and \$1.7 million will help fund U.N. activities, including those of Margot Wallström, the special representative of the secretary-general on sexual violence in conflict.

In addition, Clinton said, the Obama administration will develop a National Action Plan to track the progress of Resolution 1325's implementation within the United States.

"We will measure whether women are effectively represented in the full range of peace-building and reconstruction efforts, whether they are protected against sexual violence and whether they are the focus of conflict prevention, relief and reconciliation efforts," she said.

"Measuring our progress will help ourselves be held accountable and identify those areas where we need to do more," the secretary said.

Clinton said the mass rapes that recently occurred in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) serve as a stark reminder that much more work is needed to advance women's rights.

"Those rapes and our failure as an international community to bring that conflict to an end and to protect women and children in the process stands as a tragic rebuke to our efforts thus far," she said.

Although the United States is providing \$17 million for medical and legal services for the survivors of gender-

based violence in the DRC, “unfortunately, there is not yet the will, either in DRC itself or in the U.N. or in the international community, to help bring about an end to impunity,” she said.

Young U.S. Voters Ready for Election Day

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Young American voters registered in numbers higher than expected to cast their ballots in the November midterm elections, continuing a trend of increased political participation by young U.S. citizens.

Rock the Vote, a U.S. organization seeking to engage young Americans in politics, registered nearly 300,000 youth to vote in the November elections, exceeding its registration goal by 50 percent. Spokeswoman Maegan Carberry said although this number may seem small compared to the more than 2 million voters the group registered ahead of the 2008 presidential race, a drop-off in voter engagement is normal in midterm election years.

Carberry said voter participation in midterm races usually drops by about 15 percent from the preceding presidential race. She added that the dip occurs across all age groups and does not signify declining enthusiasm by young voters.

“While the conventional wisdom may have been in the past that young people don’t vote, that’s been largely discredited. And the 2008 election, for example, showed that you don’t have to change someone’s lifelong patterns, like convincing an old Democrat to suddenly vote Republican, or vice versa, to win. You can actually expand the electorate,” she said.

According to Rock the Vote, more than 22 million young voters cast ballots in the 2008 presidential election, marking the third consecutive election in which young voter turnout increased. Carberry said she expects the momentum to continue.

“The next few election cycles, starting with this one, are about expanding the electorate to accommodate the generation’s changing demographics because this generation is huge and they’re coming.”

Rock the Vote says one in five Americans is between the ages of 18 and 29. These voters, part of the so-called Millennial generation, will represent nearly one-quarter of the voting-age population by 2012, and more than one-third by 2020. And according to the Pew Research Center in Washington, Millennials are the most diverse generation in history — 38 percent come from ethnic and racial minorities.

YOUNG VOTERS FOCUSED ON CANDIDATES, NOT PARTIES

In recent years, young people have voted more often for Democratic candidates than for Republicans. Most notably, young people voted 2-to-1 for President Obama in the 2008 election. However, Carberry said, young people are becoming less concerned with political party identification and more interested in candidates’ platforms.

“Young people told us in a poll we conducted in September that they don’t really relate to either political party; they really relate to individual candidates who address the issues they care about,” Carberry said.

She said the poll showed the top concerns for young voters are the state of the economy, the national debt and keeping college affordable. She said one in five young people is jobless, an unemployment rate twice the national average for other age groups.

Carberry said other key issues include marriage rights, immigration reform and energy independence.

Carberry suggested that, in preparing to reach this expanding electorate in coming elections, politicians draw lessons from President Obama’s successful campaign to win the youth vote in 2008: Address young voters directly through social media and networking outlets, and in person with visits to college campuses and associations of young professionals.

United States Supports Malaysia in Trans-Pacific Partnership

By Andrew Malandrino
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States supports the addition of Malaysia, its 16th-largest trading partner, in negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and will continue to deepen its strong economic partnerships across the Asia-Pacific region, says U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk.

“U.S. participation in the TPP negotiations is predicated on the objective we share with our current TPP negotiating partners ... of expanding the group to additional countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region and securing a high standard agreement,” Kirk wrote in an October 5 letter to Congress. “Malaysia’s inclusion in the TPP negotiations will contribute meaningfully to these goals and to the development of the high standard, 21st-century, regional trade agreement we are seeking.”

The TPP, created in 2006 by Singapore, New Zealand and Chile, aims to promote regionwide economic cooperation.

Officials from the eight current TPP member economies — Australia, Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States — aim to revise and refine the TPP to reflect 21st-century trade standards, which include ensuring worker rights and protecting the environment. Malaysia is the newest member of the negotiating group, having joined during meetings in Brunei Darussalam earlier this month. Of the TPP nations, the United States currently has free trade agreements with Australia, Chile, Peru and Singapore.

The Brunei series of talks marked the third round of TPP negotiations in 2010. Members previously met in Melbourne, Australia, and San Francisco. Negotiations for the final TPP agreement are expected to continue into 2011.

In Brunei, 24 negotiating groups, including the United States, made progress toward resolving issues relating to industrial goods, agriculture and textiles. The negotiations focused on promoting competitiveness and making it easier for small and medium-sized businesses from across the region to take advantage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The United States views the TPP as a significant effort to engage with Asia and increase economic cooperation across the region. "This is an important step in expanding trade with one of the world's fastest-growing regions," U.S. Chamber of Commerce Vice President for Asia Tami Overby said during the Brunei negotiations.

President Obama's administration remains committed to engaging Asia. In 2009, President Obama became the first president to attend a meeting with all 10 leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and, in 2010, he chaired the first U.S.-ASEAN leaders meeting to take place in the United States.

In 2011, the United States will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. "Through APEC and initiatives like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we're pursuing trade relationships that benefit all our countries," President Obama said during the September U.S.-ASEAN leaders meeting.

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